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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0009
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1030
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0040
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 000791

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WHA/CEN, NEA/I, IO/MPR

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TAGS: PGOV PINR KDEM NU PREL UNGA IZ IR

SUBJECT: ORTEGA DESIRES CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE
USG, BUT SOME HARDLINERS OBJECT, CLAIMS AMBASSADOR ENRIQUEZ
(C-AL7-00063)

REF: A. MANAGUA 0789

1B. MANAGUA 0701

1C. MANAGUA 0631

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador Magda Enriquez, the Director of the MFA's Multilateral Affairs Office, believes President Ortega sincerely desires constructive relations with the United States, but she concedes that some Sandinista party hardliners object. While she acknowledges that Ortega considers President Chavez his "friend and ally," she insists that Ortega does not see eye to eye with him on all issues. She notes that the GON has differed with Iran's efforts to deny the Holocaust -- deciding instead to support the recent UN Holocaust statement. Enriquez is convinced that the Iranian government is besieged by serious domestic troubles and would probably be willing to settle its impasse with the UN Security Council regarding its nuclear objectives if a "face-saving" approach were offered, and offers Nicaragua's help to this end. Enriquez also claims that Nicaragua will not bow to China's demand that it sever its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. End Summary.

Ortega Rhetoric Hinders Constructive Relations

12. (C) On March 24, Ambassador Magda Enriquez, the Director of the Foreign Ministry's (MFA) Multilateral Affairs Office discussed with PolCouns and TDY analysts the Nicaraguan government's (GON) views on the U.S.-Nicaragua bilateral relationship and its multilateral priorities. She started off by reiterating her position that President Ortega sincerely desires constructive relations with the United States, as evidenced by the appointment of an independent Ambassador to Washington and by Foreign Minister Samuel Santos' efforts to maintain open channels with the U.S. Embassy in Managua. She conceded, however, that "some party hardliners object." While Enriquez also acknowledged that Ortega considers Venezuelan President Chavez his "friend and ally," she insisted that Ortega does not see eye to eye with Chavez on all issues and that her government will not be pressured by any other to take a position it does not support.

13. (C) When PolCouns raised our concerns that President Ortega's discourse regarding the United States has become

increasingly belligerent and unconstructive, Enriquez nodded.

She then recounted how she listened to Ortega's speech while she was driving home and counted 21 negative references to the United States. She immediately called an equally dismayed Santos, who had tallied 22 slights to the United States. Enriquez explained that she sent a note to Ortega concerning the incident, who responded that his intention was not to criticize the current U.S. government but, rather, the Reagan administration. PolCouns mentioned that during the transition period Foreign Minister Santos had recommended we minimize bilateral friction by removing our differences from the media spotlight -- an approach we support and have followed. Enriquez promised to urge her government to do likewise.

Nicaragua Differs with Iran on the Holocaust, Offers to Help Broker Nuclear Impasse

¶4. (C) Expanding on the subject of the GON's decision to develop a "sovereign foreign policy," Enriquez cited that fact that her government differed with Iran over the Holocaust, and instead, supported the recent UN Holocaust statement. Enriquez also confided that the Iranian government is besieged by serious domestic troubles and it would probably be willing to settle its impasse with the UN Security Council regarding its nuclear objectives if a "face-saving" approach were offered. Opining that perhaps North Korea could serve as a model, she reiterated Nicaragua's interest in helping advance this effort (Ref. C).

Relationship with Taiwan will Continue

¶5. (C) Commenting that the Chinese government is increasing its pressure on Nicaragua to sever its ties with Taiwan as a pre-condition to establish full-fledged diplomatic relations and to benefit from Chinese assistance, Enriquez was adamant that her government Nicaragua will not bow to this demand. She explained that the GON policy is to cooperate with both countries and to benefit from what they have to offer.

Rapprochement with Iraq

¶6. (C) Enriquez, who met last week with Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, Hamid Al-Biyati, was pleased with this first step towards rapprochement (Ref. A). She agreed that a next step could be a meeting between Foreign Minister Santos and his Iraqi counterpart. However, Enriquez reminded us that Nicaragua cannot afford to stand up, let alone, maintain an embassy in Baghdad.

Seeking our Views on UN Reform and Human Rights Commission

¶7. (C) Enriquez requested additional details on the U.S. position on UN reform and our concerns regarding the UN Human Rights Council. PolCouns offered to send materials and suggested that during her next trip to the United States, Enriquez could meet with the offices that cover these issues.

She clarified that Nicaragua's newly appointed UN Ambassador, Manuel Diaz Lacayo, will eventually take the lead on this matter. However, ongoing heart trouble will delay his arrival date in New York, explained Enriquez. (Note: The demarche on UN reform (Ref. B) was delivered while Enriquez was out of country.)

Bio

¶8. (C) Dr. Magda Enriquez Callejas-Beitler was born in Chinandega, Nicaragua of a prosperous family who sent her to the study Journalism at Temple University in the mid-1960s. She tells us that her parents sent her abroad to remove her from Nicaragua's political tensions, but ironically, she cut her "political teeth" in the United States on its social

turmoil and anti-Vietnam sentiment. Following the Sandinista victory in 1979, Enriquez returned to Nicaragua where she assumed a number of positions with the FSLN, including the MFA's director of Middle East and Asia Policy. She also frequently interpreted for Daniel Ortega. After Violeta Chamorro's victory, Enriquez returned to Philadelphia and represented the FSLN in the United States and Canada. She received a PhD in education from Temple University, worked for years in the Philadelphia school system, and also taught Bilingual and Bicultural Studies at La Salle University.

Enriquez has been married twice, both times to Jewish Americans, and claims that

after she introduced Ortega to then-Israeli PM Shimon Perez, Ortega's views on Israel became "more moderate." She is the mother of four children, all U.S. citizens.

Comment

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¶9. (C) Along with her boss Santos, Enriquez appears to be aligned with the FSLN moderates, recognizes the value of positive engagement with the United States, and probably lends a voice of reason to balance the more extreme views of the Sandinista hardliners like Lenin Cerna and Miguel D'Escoto. How much sway she actually holds over Ortega is questionable, however.

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